PART I - FACE SHEET

APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL ASSISTANCE

Modified Standard Form 424 (Rev.02/07 to confirm to the Corporation's eGrants System)

1. TYPE OF SUBMISSION:
Application [X] Non-Construction

2a. DATE SUBMITTED TO CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE (CNCS):

3. DATE RECEIVED BY STATE:
10-JAN-12

STATE APPLICATION IDENTIFIER:

2b. APPLICATION ID:
12AC133063

4. DATE RECEIVED BY FEDERAL AGENCY:

FEDERAL IDENTIFIER:
12ACHMT0010001

5. APPLICATION INFORMATION

LEGAL NAME: Montana Conservation Corps, Inc.

DUNS NUMBER: 961126844 - 3506

ADDRESS (give street address, city, state, zip code and county):
Montana Conservation Corps
206 N. Grand Ave.
Bozeman MT 59715 - 3506
County: Gallatin

NAME AND CONTACT INFORMATION FOR PROJECT DIRECTOR OR OTHER PERSON TO BE CONTACTED ON MATTERS INVOLVING THIS APPLICATION (give area codes):
NAME: Jonathan Mckinney
TELEPHONE NUMBER: (406) 587-4475 107
FAX NUMBER: (406) 587-2606
INTERNET E-MAIL ADDRESS: jono@mtcorps.org

6. EMPLOYER IDENTIFICATION NUMBER (EIN):
810467431

7. TYPE OF APPLICANT:
7a. Non-Profit
7b. Community-Based Organization

8. TYPE OF APPLICATION (Check appropriate box).
[ ] NEW [X] NEW/PREVIOUS GRANTEE
[ ] CONTINUATION [ ] AMENDMENT
If Amendment, enter appropriate letter(s) in box(es): [ ] [ ]
A. AUGMENTATION B. BUDGET REVISION
C. NO COST EXTENSION D. OTHER *(specify below):*

9. NAME OF FEDERAL AGENCY:
Corporation for National and Community Service

10a. CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE NUMBER: 94.006
10b. TITLE: AmeriCorps State

11.a. DESCRIPTIVE TITLE OF APPLICANT'S PROJECT:
Montana Conservation Corps

11.b. CNCS PROGRAM INITIATIVE (IF ANY):

12. AREAS AFFECTED BY PROJECT (List Cities, Counties, States, etc):
Montana Conservation Corps serves communities and public lands throughout Montana, and in contiguous at-risk ecosystems of the Northern Rocky Mountains a

13. PROPOSED PROJECT: START DATE: 01/01/13 END DATE: 12/31/13

14. CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT OF: a.Applicant MT 001 b.Program MT 001

15. ESTIMATED FUNDING: Year #: 1

a. FEDERAL	$ 1,872,000.00
b. APPLICANT	$ 3,118,000.00
c. STATE	$ 0.00
d. LOCAL	$ 0.00
e. OTHER	$ 0.00
f. PROGRAM INCOME	$ 0.00
g. TOTAL	$ 4,990,000.00

16. IS APPLICATION SUBJECT TO REVIEW BY STATE EXECUTIVE ORDER 12372 PROCESS?
[ ] YES. THIS PREAPPLICATION/APPLICATION WAS MADE AVAILABLE TO THE STATE EXECUTIVE ORDER 12372 PROCESS FOR REVIEW ON:
DATE:
[X] NO. PROGRAM IS NOT COVERED BY E.O. 12372

17. IS THE APPLICANT DELINQUENT ON ANY FEDERAL DEBT?
[ ] YES if "Yes," attach an explanation. [X] NO

18. TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE AND BELIEF, ALL DATA IN THIS APPLICATION/PREAPPLICATION ARE TRUE AND CORRECT, THE DOCUMENT HAS BEEN DULY AUTHORIZED BY THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE APPLICANT AND THE APPLICANT WILL COMPLY WITH THE ATTACHED ASSURANCES IF THE ASSISTANCE IS AWARDED.

a. TYPED NAME OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE:
Jonathan Mckinney

b. TITLE:
President and CEO

c. TELEPHONE NUMBER:
(406) 587-4475 107

d. SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE:

e. DATE SIGNED:
04/26/12

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Executive Summary

Over the past twenty years, Montana Conservation Corps has developed a versatile program that uses the power of service and the crew dynamic to mobilize a new generation of land stewards to protect Montana's iconic landscape. This environment, however, is at-risk from catastrophic wildfires, invasive weeds, trails in disrepair, natural disasters, and climate change. MCC will recruit 245 AmeriCorps members to serve on small crews with 177 partners to improve 650 miles of trails, restore 2500 acres of public and tribal lands, retrofit 1,200 homes for energy conservation, and mobilize 1,250 volunteers. Young veterans from the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars, while continuing their service in AmeriCorps, will help with wildfire mitigation gaining essential skills to transition to forestry jobs and productive lives. This project will focus on the CNCS focus areas of environmental stewardship and veterans. The CNCS investment of $1,872,000 is matched with $3,118,000 (62% grantee match).

Rationale and Approach

When Montanans gathered to rewrite their constitution in 1972, the health of the ecosystem was on their minds. Mining and logging had provided great wealth over the past century, but these industries also left lasting scars on the land, waters, and people.

With the new constitution, Montanans embraced environmental stewardship. The preamble opens with: "We the people of Montana grateful to God for the quiet beauty of our state, the grandeur of our mountains, the vastness of our rolling plains [...]" In the Declaration of Rights, Montanans asserted their inalienable "right to a clean and healthful environment."

Not many years later, leaders conceived of the Montana Conservation Corps (MCC) to engage young people as stewards for the "quiet beauty of our state." And like President Roosevelt who launched the Civilian Conservation Corps during the Great Depression, MCC's founders had a vision of restoring lives, not just the environment. Today, in celebrating its 20th anniversary, MCC has a proud legacy of stewardship that includes 13,000 miles of trails improved to access the "grandeur of our mountains," 1.1 million trees planted and 25,000 acres treated for noxious weeds to restore the "vastness of our rolling plains," and nearly 10,000 homes retrofitted to conserve energy for a "clean and healthful environment."

It is a legacy that includes over 3,000 AmeriCorps members who've served under MCC's mission to "inspire young people through hands-on conservation service to be leaders, stewards of the land, and

engaged citizens who improve their communities."

NEED: ENVIRONMENT AND VETERANS

Forty years after adopting the Constitution, "the quiet beauty of our state, the grandeur of our mountains" remain Montana's defining character, and its economic engine. Second only to agriculture, active outdoor recreation drives $2.6 billion of economic activity. The Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research (ITRR) at the University of Montana notes: "Mountains and forests; Yellowstone and Glacier National Parks; and open space and uncrowded areas were the most frequent attractions for vacationers in Montana."

Between 2009 and 2010, visitation to national parks in Montana increased by nearly 9%, with a record three million visitors in Yellowstone. The National Parks and Conservation Association (NPCA) describes these parks as "economic performance superchargers." Research by Headwaters Economics shows that communities in the West with nearby access to protected public lands like national parks and forests are the fastest growing with the most diversified economies and highest wages.

Visits to state parks have increased 50% since 2002 with 1.9 million visitors in 2010 - twice Montana's population. The Outdoor Industry Association reports that 49% of Montanans recreate using trails; 46% camp; and 48% participate in wildlife viewing - among the nation's highest participation rates.

The ITRR 2011 Travel and Recreation report concludes: "Common sense suggests that Montana residents [...] should strive to maintain the open spaces, public lands access, and wildlife."

Unfortunately, shortages of resources mean that these lands often do not get the care they need. A third of Montana's lands are public domain, and 99% of Montana's 15,000 miles of trails is on federal lands. The agencies charged with administering these lands, including the National Park Service and U.S. Forest Service, report system-wide backlog maintenance needs exceeding $25 billion. Yellowstone National Park reports a $23 million annual shortfall to protect the park. In testimony before Congress in March of 2011, NPCA President, Tom Kiernan, testified the National Park Service is facing "a growing crisis with [...] deteriorating landscapes and historic artifacts, dangerous or crumbling roads and trails."

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Invasive weeds threaten ecosystems in every part of the state. Spotted knapweed infestations reduce winter forage for elk by 50% to 90%. The Montana Statewide Noxious Weed Awareness and Education Program notes that such infestations increase runoff and triple sedimentation in streams. They report the yearly cost of leafy spurge in the Northern Rockies at $129 million.

Drought and pine bark beetle infestations have damaged forests and escalated risks for catastrophic wildfires across millions of acres. Over 225,000 acres of Montana forests have burned since 2002 costing millions of dollars - funds which then have to be diverted from other conservation priorities. As a result, land managers have enormous needs for assistance to restore forest health.

A different environmental risk exists in Montana's demographics with an overstock of poorly insulated homes that have excessive energy needs. By 2030, Montana is projected to have the fifth highest percentage of people over age 65. And with Montana's 15% poverty rate, a rate that exceeds the national average, too many of these citizens live in poorly winterized homes. Of the 24,000 families that qualify for low income energy assistance in 2011, 27% live in outdated, poorly weatherized trailer homes. These needs are beyond the capacity of current weatherization programs.

Finally, there exists a special circumstance here that links to MCC's environmental work. Montana has the second highest number per capita of veterans. For vets recently returned from Iraq and Afghanistan, the depressed job market makes the transition to civilian life especially difficult. Compounding the depressed job market, Montana's vast and rural geography - 650 miles east to west and 52 of 56 counties classified rural or "frontier" by the Census Bureau - adds difficulties for veterans trying to connect to services and to each other for support. Unemployment for these veterans tops 20% - the fourth highest level in the U.S. With MCC, environmental stewardship is part of the solution to their needs.

AMERICORPS: MEANS TO SOLVE NEEDS OF ENVIRONMENT AND VETERANS

Since 1993, AmeriCorps members have been an invaluable asset in meeting the needs of the environment in Montana. In addition, young people and veterans are finding purpose and gaining skills for leadership, stewardship, careers, and a lifetime of civic engagement through their service with MCC.

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With AmeriCorps, MCC recruits young people and volunteers to a program that is highly adaptable and responsive to the changing needs of Montana's land, communities, and people. No other program can deliver the value and capabilities of MCC's AmeriCorps members across such a vast landscape.

MCC's network of 177 project partners is the fulcrum that leverages the power of AmeriCorps to meet needs in Montana communities. These partners include nonprofits of all sizes, city, county and state government, schools, and large federal agencies like the Forest Service. MCC staff members are consummate partnership builders who routinely reach out to these organizations to identify needs where members may help. Regardless of their size, these institutions share a need for the human capital that AmeriCorps members may provide to protect the environment. They engage MCC's members as a value-added resource to help them get things done in a manner that is cost-effective and time-wise. Without AmeriCorps, these organizations simply do not have the capacity or resources to meet diverse needs. MCC crews are fully prepared with skills, tools, transportation, and supervision to maintain the trails, reduce soil erosion into streams, eradicate invasive weeds, or provide low cost weatherization.

As an AmeriCorps program, MCC has improved over 13,000 miles of trail, a sum that approaches the total mileage of trails in Montana. Over the last five year, members have retrofitted for energy conservation nearly 10,000 homes. At a cost in labor and materials of $411 per home, AmeriCorps members have vastly expanded the capacity of Montana's Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) to improve energy efficiency and help disadvantaged citizens cope with Montana's harsh winters. Recent analysis by the National Park Service revealed that corps programs like MCC improve habitat and trails at a 44% savings to the agency, thereby vastly enhancing the capacity of parks as stewards of public lands. These results demonstrate how AmeriCorps is making a significant difference in solving needs for environmental stewardship in Montana and the Northern Rockies.

The flexibility of the MCC AmeriCorps crew model is responsive to the needs of partners. Crews may respond on short notice for emergency sandbagging against rising floods, assist with a week-long project to construct a connector pathway to link a neighborhood trail system, or complete landscape-scale wildfire fuels reduction over several months. MCC customizes member training in diverse conservation skills such as chainsaw operation, trail construction, weed control, and energy

conservation to deliver a one-stop-shop for diverse community partners with environmental needs.

These partners value MCC's AmeriCorps resource. The Montana Heritage Society noted: "MCC is absolutely one of our essential and valued resources for all activities that require intensive labor, saw work, and landscape remediation." A National Park Service supervisor wrote: "The impact of this project is huge. Shelf Lake Trail needed some love. Thanks for making Yellowstone a better and safer place."

With over 35% of the Park Service and Forest Service work force eligible to retire in the next two years, an additional priority for environmental stewardship is to mobilize a new generation of land stewards. In President Obama's 2010 America's Great Outdoors report, the #1 recommendation is to advance a "21st Century Conservation Service Corps to engage young Americans in public lands and water restoration." The report proposes to expand partnerships with corps to recruit and train a "new generation of citizen stewards" and develop "quality conservation jobs and service opportunities that protect and restore America's natural and cultural resources." At MCC, AmeriCorps provides a pipeline for young people to enter these environmental stewardship careers.

AmeriCorps members also are essential to Governor Schweitzer's Warm Hearts Warm Homes clean energy program. Each fall, members provide low-income residents in all fifty-six counties and seven Indian reservations with simple energy-saving retrofit measures and education. With AmeriCorps, MCC has the capacity to train, supervise, and deploy small teams across the state and deliver unmatched cost-efficiencies that make this low-cost clean energy project possible.

MCC remains a go-to for hundreds of local organizations that can benefit from the manpower of MCC's AmeriCorps program - from the Musselshell Valley Community Foundation in Roundup that needed help clearing flood debris and resurrecting miles of fencing to keep cattle on ranches, to the Flathead Food Bank and Waste Not Project needing help to construct elevated vegetable garden boxes for seniors.

In 2011, MCC also adapted the crew-based model to provide unemployed veterans with training and certifications for jobs in environmental stewardship and wildland firefighting. The Veterans Green Corps builds on the camaraderie of a shared experience where vets may support each other and

refocus their military training toward civilian service and jobs. "I got in, got out, and got on with my life with MCC," reflected an MCC veteran AmeriCorps member.

EVIDENCE-BASED, MEASURABLE IMPACTS

Over the last three year period, MCC's AmeriCorps members and volunteers improved 3,551 miles of trails on public lands and in communities. They planted 209,000 trees and reduced risks of wildfires across 3,400 acres of wooded lands near historic sites and recreation facilities. They completed 213 miles of fencing to improve wildlife habitat and treated over 15,000 acres for invasive weeds. They retrofitted 5,200 homes with clean energy measures to help low-income families cope with Montana's rugged winters.

In 2011, 92% of partners rated the quality of work and productivity of AmeriCorps crews as 4 or 5 on a 5-point scale. Better than 9 in 10 highly rated improvements to the condition of lands or structures. Every one of 177 partners is interested in having MCC back. These results are consistent year to year.

While serving across the region, AmeriCorps members make invaluable contributions to the efforts of land managers, ranchers, and community leaders to protect Montanans' "right to a clean and healthful environment." A Forest Service supervisor wrote: "The crew and its leaders remained positive and hard-working to the end. The trail improvements they accomplished are already an asset to the public by reducing erosion and making a safer and more appealing route to a beautiful waterfall."

A significant part of MCC's work every year focuses on protecting the nation's most wild places like the Bob Marshall Wilderness. The capacity of MCC crews to operate in remote and rugged natural areas for extended periods - sometimes months - has made MCC an invaluable asset for land stewards. This year, the Forest Service nominated MCC for the prestigious Bob Marshall Stewardship Award. The nominating District Ranger wrote: "What a difference MCC has made in the Bob. The miles of trails repaired and maintained and overall camp site restoration by MCC have helped so many visitors enjoy a quality wilderness experience - for now and the future." MCC was also recognized with a National Wilderness Award from the Department of Agriculture in 2005, and a Project of the Year Award in 2008 from The Corps Network for a 550 mile-long clean-up of the Yellowstone River.

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AmeriCorps members provide an added benefit for the environment - they inspire land managers. One Bureau of Land Management employee stated, "I am extremely impressed with the crew's attitude, work ethic, land ethic, and productivity. This experience has renewed my faith in the interest and caring for the land by a young group of adults. Working with the MCC group has been one of the best experiences of my career, which spans thirty years!"

During the last three years, crews have worked with the World Wildlife Fund to restore prairie habitat in north central Montana. Members have removed or modified over 30 miles of fencing to enhance migration corridors, and dusted more than 18,000 prairie dog burrows to protect against sylvatic plague-transmitting fleas, which are a threat to prairie dog health.

MCC's capabilities encompass Montana's cultural heritage. In 2011, the Montana Preservation Alliance (MPA) presented MCC an Excellence in Historic Preservation Award. The MPA noted: "MCC's very reasonable fees has meant that many historic preservation projects which otherwise might not have been undertaken due to insufficient funding not only take place but are completed successfully."

The natural disasters that threatened Montana communities this spring show another side of MCC's interventions. When floods hit Missoula, Bozeman and Billings, members responded immediately to help sandbag. When flood waters receded, MCC deployed crews to Roundup to help ranchers repair damaged fences and clear debris, and to Little Bighorn National Battlefield to repair trails in preparation for the annual battle reenactment so important to the local economy. In previous years, MCC assisted with hurricane recovery efforts in Florida and Louisiana, and this fall, crews were on stand-by to deploy East after Hurricane Irene.

The community impact of the MCC is just as evident in the Warm Hearts Warm Homes clean energy project. Last year, in addition to sealing drafty windows and doors and insulating hot water heaters and pipes, the members installed over 16,726 CFL light bulbs in 1,546 homes. The light bulbs alone are estimated to provide $850,000 in lifecycle savings for low income homeowners.

Community volunteers enjoy the hands-on nature of MCC-hosted service events like National Public

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Lands Day. In 2011, 2,076 volunteers, including 1,495 youth under eighteen, served over 30,000 hours. Ninety-eight percent of volunteers with MCC reflect a highly positive experience. Service days also provide great opportunities to collaborate with VISTA, Senior Corps, and other A*C programs.

We are most proud of the impact on MCC members and youth participants. Ninety-four percent of AmeriCorps members report improved knowledge, skills, and motivation to be civically engaged. One youth participant from the MCC AmeriCorps-led summer program reflected: "I think MCC was the best experience I've ever had. I feel like I won't give up in school. My work ethic is heightened and I feel more confident. I feel like community is a good thing and is worth protecting. I appreciate and am proud and honored to have been part of MCC."

PROGRAM COMPONENTS THAT ENABLE POWERFUL SERVICE EXPERIENCES

MCC exists to empower young people and prepare them with skills and values for leadership, stewardship, and civic engagement. MCC's strategy is to engage young people, including local youth, veterans, college-age members, and volunteers, in meaningful hands-on service where they gain skills, knowledge, and values about the environment and service to community. The crew experience is the crucible for forging an ethic of civic responsibility. Members are constantly reminded that their first step toward developing citizenship is within the crew. Mastering this intense experience and building respectful relationships with people of different backgrounds provides skills to participate in a pluralistic society.

Daily life is rigorous for the members. For much of their term of service, they are camped-out. Days start early with stretching and safety briefings. Members typically work eight to ten hour days on labor intensive projects using hand tools. At the end of the day, crews gather for tool sharpening, dinner and a team debrief. Members zip into their sleeping bags early, exhausted and satisfied from a full day of service with tangible results.

Education is infused in every aspect of the MCC experience. The crew leaders deliver weekly education from MCC's Public Lands and Citizenship Education (PLACE) curriculum -- a resource that links outdoor service with citizen responsibility. Staff members facilitate "Meaning of Service" discussions in the field using "The Civically Engaged Reader." Members volunteer ten or more hours outside their regular assignments to explore other interests in the community. Members also attend public

meetings. These programmatic elements enable direct experiences of Democracy in America. One member commented on the program evaluation: "This year has shown me that some of the most valuable ways to spend my time is in service to others."

MCC members serve from five regional offices in Billings, Bozeman, Helena, Kalispell, and Missoula. From these facilities, they deploy as crews to project sites across the state, covering all fifty-six Montana counties, including the seven Indian reservations, and to neighboring ecosystems in Idaho, Wyoming, and North Dakota. This regional structure allows staff to cultivate community-based or statewide partnerships that are responsive to local needs and provide meaningful projects for members. Each field crew is self-contained with its own vehicle, tools, camping equipment and food, ensuring that crews are able to respond to varied project needs and meet different timeframes.

MCC's program calendar capitalizes on Montana's climate. In preparation for the May to November project season, MCC enrolls 81 members in February to train as crew leaders -- 52 for young adult AmeriCorps crews, 29 for Youth Service Expeditions. Orientation to national service, member policies, and training in all facets of team leadership are addressed while much of the state is under snow.

Instituted in 1999, MCC's best-in-nation crew leader development program builds competencies in five areas -- civic responsibility, leadership, communication, land stewardship, and technical skills. After the initial orientation to AmeriCorps and MCC policies, the training covers Wilderness Advanced First Aid, defensive driving, a week-long team facilitation and leadership competencies workshop, and technical training for trail skills, chainsaw operation, and backcountry travel. These crew leaders also participate in the ServeMontana Symposium, connecting with other AmeriCorps and VISTA members.

Between winter training sessions, members serve with local organizations. These projects -- like improving shelving for a food bank or planting trees in parks -- set in motion the dynamics of crew-based service. By mid-April, with improving weather in the Rockies, the leaders increase service on environmental projects. For events like Global Youth Service Day and AmeriCorps Week, crew leaders develop projects with schools and lead hundreds of youth in outdoor service activities that foster a higher level of civic engagement.

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In late May, 139 half-time members join on 25 field crews, typically with two crew leaders and five corps members. Five quarter-time members will serve with summer-only Weed Strike Teams. After two weeks of orientation to national service, including a review of MCC policies and AmeriCorps prohibited activities and basic skills training, the crews deploy for twenty weeks of project work, which allows for ongoing on-the-job education. Members spend their final weeks retrofitting homes of low income families with energy saving measures prior to graduating in November.

Twenty veterans will serve quarter-time positions with the Veterans Green Corps during the summer or fall. These vets train in chainsaw and wildland fire-fighting skills, and work on forestry projects to reduce wildfire risks. The camaraderie, hard work, and discipline on these crews provide a positive environment where veterans may explore new options. "It leaves us with a feeling that we made a tangible difference in our corner of the forest," reflected one veteran about his MCC experience.

MCC's month-long Youth Service Expeditions adapt this field crew model to mobilize 144 teenagers, ages 14-17, during the summer. Twenty-four Expeditions, with six youth and two AmeriCorps crew leaders, camp and serve on diverse projects - from building trails on Indian reservations to mapping weed infestations on wildlife refuges. Youth participants gain self-confidence and develop values and skills to be volunteers, hard workers, responsible land stewards, and effective team-members. A two-year follow-up survey of youth members shows that 94% still volunteer on a regular basis - a rate four times the national average for their peers.

The success and safety of members is monitored by a highly competent and seasoned staff. MCC's regional structure facilitates attentive member supervision with regular field visits and debriefing after every project. An active Risk Management Committee guides best practices for field operations.

MCC's member evaluation process is superior. In addition to regular feedback as part of the crew dynamic, comprehensive written evaluations addressing the five member development objectives are delivered by staff at mid-term and at the end of the season. These evaluations also address each member's Individual Action Plan. At the end of the term, members complete an in-depth program evaluation online, with results informing annual program improvements.

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Young people are attracted to the MCC to work outdoors, help the environment, develop personally, and advance their college education. MCC receives four applications for every position. The internet has become the leading means by which people learn about MCC. The Recruitment and Outreach Coordinator manages MCC's interactive website, Facebook page, and blog. Members post humorous videos on YouTube. MCC advertises on the AmeriCorps website and with job sites like CoolWorks! Second only to the internet, word of mouth from alumni directs hundreds of applicants to MCC.

These practices lead to a diverse corps. Most members are in their younger twenties. Montana residents comprise 25% of MCC members, with the rest coming from across the country. Women make up 45% of the corps. Members come from all economic backgrounds, and 11% represent non-white races and ethnicities - exceeding Montana's 9% minority population. It is a priority for MCC to increase diversity to better reflect America's population and attract more diverse people to conservation careers. MCC is actively strengthening connections with Montana's Indian communities. MCC's youth programs are highly diverse with 20% non-white participants, and 50% from low income families.

The Corps is an inclusive program with between 20% and 30% of members self-reporting a disability on the annual ServeMontana survey. The hands-on learning environment and small crew setting make MCC a place for all people to succeed. MCC advertises equal access, and provides accommodations for members able to perform the essential functions of the position.

LINKING NEEDS, INTERVENTIONS, AMERICORPS, AND OUTCOMES

Here in Montana where our sense of community extends far beyond Main Street to encompass the vast public lands surrounding our towns, the environment is the foundation of our quality of life and economy. It is distressing therefore, that Montana's environment is increasingly at risk. Forests are threatened by catastrophic wildfires after years of drought and pine bark beetle infestations. Habitat that was once pristine is now in jeopardy from noxious weeds that compromise forage for wildlife and water quality. Montana trails are in disrepair from heavy use. Poorly winterized homes pollute the environment and waste energy and money for low income families.

With Montana's traditions of stewardship and an economy fueled by outdoor recreation on public lands, the need for an effective and cost-efficient resource to protect the environment is paramount,

especially at a time when state and federal resources are constrained.

Over the past twenty years, MCC has developed a versatile program that uses the power of service and the crew dynamic to mobilize a new generation of environmental stewards. Through national service, young people, including Montana teenagers, young adults, and veterans, are learning skills, and gaining experience and confidence as productive citizens.

Operating from five regional offices and a headquarters office in Bozeman, MCC has developed a program to train young people in diverse conservation and leadership skills, and deploy them to serve on environmental projects of every kind, in settings from community greenways to remote wilderness areas. MCC is also able to mobilize and supervise a veritable army of thousands of volunteers who bring their enthusiasm and muscles to bear in meeting these needs. A network of 177 project partners, from local nonprofits to federal agencies, ensures that MCC is responsive to the highest priority needs of Montana's environment and communities.

Since 1993, AmeriCorps has been an integral part of this dynamic solution to the needs of the environment, communities and people in Montana. AmeriCorps provides an outlet for 245 young adults who want to serve their country, help the environment in America's "Last Best Place," and grow as resourceful individuals and contributing citizens. AmeriCorps provides a versatile resource of well-trained, well-led, well-equipped, and well-supervised crews to every corner of Montana and the Northern Rockies. AmeriCorps provides a flexibility to adapt to the diverse needs of land managers and community leaders. AmeriCorps supports an infrastructure to mobilize thousands of youth and volunteers as the current and future stewards of the environment. AmeriCorps provides a bridge for veterans struggling to cross from their years of military service to new lives of purpose in civil society.

In 2013, MCC will deliver outstanding outcomes for Montana's at-risk environment and for veterans. MCC has ambitious targets in four national performance measures. 245 AmeriCorps MCC members will create or improve 650 miles of trails to increase access to public lands. They will clean or improve 2,500 acres of habitat in parks and public and tribal lands. For both of these performance measures, the outcome is for greater than 80% of project partners to rate significantly improved conditions of trails or habitat. MCC members also will retrofit 1,200 homes to increase energy efficiency for low income residents. 80% of these homeowners (960) will rate improvements in the condition for energy

efficiency of their home as 4-5 on a 5-point scale. The members will mobilize over 1,250 volunteers as assets in Montana communities.

Among these AmeriCorps members, 20 will be veterans enrolled in the Veterans Green Corps to gain job skills and marketable certifications. For this Tier 1 performance measure, all veteran members will be provided chainsaw and wildfire training, and at least 16 (80%) will obtain the S212 chainsaw certification and Basic Wildland Firefighter Certification needed to increase their employability.

For 2013, with support from the CNCS, AmeriCorps members and veterans with MCC will deliver nearly 300,000 hours of service to protect Montana's environment and preserve "the quiet beauty of our state, the grandeur of our mountains, the vastness of our rolling plains," while gaining skills and values as 21st century environmental stewards and engaged citizens in their communities.

Organizational Capability

EXPERIENCE, STAFFING, AND MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

MCC was awarded its first AmeriCorps grant in 1993. From the beginning, AmeriCorps values of service, impact, and civic engagement have aligned closely with MCC's program objectives. Over these eighteen years, MCC has demonstrated its capacity for sound programmatic and fiscal oversight and consistent compliance with AmeriCorps rules and regulations.

Steady and strong leadership has been a key to sustained growth and impact. MCC is governed by a diverse Board of Directors with statewide representation. The Board meets quarterly in-person, with conference calls and committee meetings in-between. Most recently in 2009, the Board completed a comprehensive long-term planning process clarifying objectives to serve youth, strengthen communities, and build organizational capacity.

The President/CEO is in his tenth year at MCC. He has twenty-seven years experience in nonprofit organizations and a master's degree in environmental studies and nonprofit administration. He was a two-term board of directors member and officer at The Corps Network, the national association of corps, and is currently chairman of the board of the Montana Nonprofit Association.

The Director of Operations is a CPA with a background in public auditing where she performed A-133 governmental audits, including single audits in accordance with OMB circulars for municipalities,

universities, and large nonprofits. She has twenty-five years experience managing federal grants, including sixteen years expertly managing MCC's AmeriCorps grant. She supervises MCC five-person administration team.

The Program Director has dual master's degrees in philosophy of education and counseling, and thirty years experience in experiential education and youth development -- sixteen with MCC. He supervises the five Regional Directors and the Program Manager, and guides the development and implementation of the field crew, Youth Service Expedition, and Veterans Green Corps programs.

MCC recently added a Director of Development and Community Partnership position to promote innovative partnerships supported through additional funding from grants and donations.

Under the direction of the Program Director, the Program Manager possesses a depth of national service experience as a VISTA Leader, Training Officer at ServeMontana and Program Manager for the Montana Campus Corps. She works closely with the Regional staff to train crew leaders, institute and monitor best practices for member development and risk management. She also supervises the Recruitment and Outreach Manager in the state office.

Members are under the supervision of regional staff. MCC's five regional supervisors have between seven and twelve years experience managing the AmeriCorps program. These supervisors are MCC's "ear to the ground." They connect with project partners in their area and negotiate agreements to link the resources of AmeriCorps members with local needs, and they communicate with partners to ensure compliance with MCC and AmeriCorps policies. Each regional supervisor is assisted by a program coordinator who provides the day-to-day supervision of member training and field activities, and who coordinates the other seasonal field staff. MCC field operation systems ensure that even crews working in remote settings for extended periods receive consistent supervision and support. MCC is deliberate in every aspect of member supervision and development, and has effective practices in place to promote safety and compliance with policies.

MCC has evolved this five-region structure to provide consistent management of a complex program across a vast state, while also enabling each regional office to respond to local needs and opportunities.

Narratives

MCC utilizes a fund accounting program to record accounting entries and produce management reports that detail expenditures by expense category, funding sources, and functional categories allowing up-to-date analysis of grant and match requirements. A system of internal checks and balances is maintained through the separation of duties between the President/CEO, Director of Operations, Program Director, and the Board of Directors.

An annual audit is conducted by an independent auditor, and for the last twelve years, the auditors have issued an unqualified opinion of the financial statements of the MCC. In 2007, as part of an OIG audit of the Montana Office of Community Service, the MCC records and procedures were reviewed. The results of this audit confirmed MCC's comprehensive and effective management practices. The Office of Community Service conducts annual site reviews and has consistently found MCC to have effective systems to comply with AmeriCorps policies.

MCC has institutionalized comprehensive evaluation systems to monitor performance of every facet of the organization -- from field crews to executive leadership. MCC has evaluation systems in place to track project accomplishments, partner satisfaction, volunteer engagement, and field activities. Regional staff supervisors conduct regular field visits with crews, and the crew leaders maintain a daily log and debrief with their supervisor after every hitch. Member evaluations are completed at mid-term and at the end of service. At the end of their term, members complete in-depth program evaluations. MCC Youth Service Expedition teams use similar evaluation instruments, but also collect feedback from parents. The data from all these evaluation systems is collected and managed by the state office and used to inform project reporting and annual program improvements.

FINANCIAL AND IN-KIND RESOURCES TO SUPPORT THE PROGRAM

Since its inception, MCC's success has hinged on its ability to respond to needs, form productive partnerships, and maintain a broad base of support. While the predictable performance of AmeriCorps crews brings legitimacy to these relationships, it is the personal outreach of regional supervisors that opens the doors to these collaborations. MCC's five regional supervisors are constantly searching for opportunities to leverage the brains, muscles, and goodwill of MCC members in communities. Needs are identified in planning documents developed by state or federal agencies to authorize expenditures, through discussion with under-resourced community organizations, and in response to crises and disasters. In all cases, MCC aims to develop projects that provide meaningful service for members and

improve resources for the environment and communities. The President/CEO coordinates with agency leadership at the state and federal level.

In 2011, MCC partnered with 177 organizations to complete 265 projects. These organizations value the members. "Having the MCC crew was great. They were able to accomplish tasks in a few hours that would have taken my staff weeks," commented the director of the Children's Museum of Bozeman.

These partners contribute $3 million toward MCC's $5 million budget, proof MCC has the ability to secure dependable and increasing match resources. Every year, nearly 100% of partners indicate their interest in using MCC again. MCC continues to increase the overall share of grantee match.

Though public agencies - State Parks, National Forests, Wildlife Refuges, National Parks, and Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services - deliver the majority of match funds, MCC also partners with 75-90 nonprofits every year who may also contribute toward the costs of the MCC program. Prior to the start of every project, whether it is for cost-reimbursement or at no cost, the partnership is formalized with a signed agreement. MCC has multi-year, mutual-benefit cooperative agreements in place with all the major federal land agencies. These are routinely reauthorized as MCC is valued by these agencies as an essential resource for completing deferred maintenance, youth engagement, and workforce development.

The AmeriCorps members are also prepared to respond to disasters. MCC has in place a memorandum of understanding with the CNCS for deployment to federal disasters. This agreement authorizes reimbursement of expenditures during federally designated disasters. MCC also has relationships with local state disaster services in order to respond to local emergencies as needed.

MCC continues to diversify other sources of match with increasing grants and donations. To further the goal to engage more youth as a resource in their community and prepare them as engaged citizens, MCC is developing innovative community partnerships. For example, MCC partnered with a local community action agency to engage youth at risk of dropping out of school in summer youth corps experiences. This partnership was made possible with grants from United Way, Youth Court Services, private foundations, and individual donors. MCC will raise $120,000 in contributed income

Narratives

for 2013.

ABILITY AND STRUCTURE TO ENSURE COMPLIANCE

The MCC program design and management systems are the product of twenty years experience in running a conservation corps in a vast and rural state. Even while members complete projects with hundreds of partner organizations, often serving in remote settings for extended periods, MCC staff retains full authority and supervision. MCC's organizational structure, with operations and program leadership from the headquarters office and supervision of the members by experienced staff in the five regional offices, provides for consistent compliance with AmeriCorps rules and regulations. MCC updates its policies and practices annually to ensure they are in compliance with CNCS rules and regulations. All MCC employees are educated about AmeriCorps policies. When developing projects, partners are briefed to ensure that MCC's compliance is not put in jeopardy. During their orientation, members are trained in these policies, with particular focus on prohibited activities. The Member Handbook includes all AmeriCorps rules and regulations applicable to members. MCC's member recruitment systems incorporate systematic checklists to ensure that all current background check requirements (CHC, NSOPR, FBI) are completed in a timely manner in accordance with regulations.

To ensure non-displacement of workers, MCC project agreements verify that AmeriCorps members do not displace positions. MCC obtains union concurrence for all paid projects.

CONSULTATION: As an AmeriCorps State program, MCC is not required to consult with other state commissions. However, as members serve in Idaho, Wyoming, and North Dakota, the President/CEO consults with commissions in these states. All support the activities of the MCC in their state.

ENROLLMENT AND RETENTION: MCC consistently enrolls 100% of slots. Retention in 2011 was 93%. This was the highest level ever (up from 89% in 2009 and 2010) and reflects ongoing efforts to help members succeed. The MCC experience is inherently challenging. Projects are physical and crew life in remote living circumstances is intense. Improvements in retention reflect the development of MCC's recruitment resources to better educate applicants about the nature of the experience. The application and interview processes help staff assess applicants' readiness. Most importantly, it is the quality of the program and service projects, MCC's attention to the cultivation of positive crew dynamics, and insistence on supportive supervision of members that provides the incentives and tools

that help members complete their term of service.

PERFORMANCE TARGETS AND COMPLIANCE: In 2011, as in past years, MCC met or exceeded performance targets. This year members completed 761 miles of trail work, exceeding the goal of 600 miles. Crews also completed 4,510 acres of habitat improvement, with 2,912 acres treated for invasive weeds. The result of increasing efforts to eradicate invasive weeds, this more than doubles the goal set three years ago (1,500 acres). Partners commend the members' productivity on projects with 92% rating crew performance a 4 or 5 on a 5-point scale. Members ended their season by retrofitting 1,546 homes with energy conservation measures. MCC's efforts to engage more volunteers, especially youth, have been hugely successful. After years of striving to reach 1,000 volunteers, this season, MCC was able to engage over 2,000 volunteers in more than 30,000 hours of service, including over 1,300 youth volunteers. MCC is on track to meet the member objectives for leadership and civic involvement.

Through annual audits and site visits by ServeMontana staff, monthly periodic expense reports, and biannual progress reports, MCC demonstrates compliance with all grant terms and conditions.

Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy

BUDGET DESIGN: MCC requests $1,872,000 in federal funds to support 245 AmeriCorps members (144.11 MSY) at a CNCS cost of $12,990 per member. This budget represents a stabilization of the MCC program after expansion following the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. The need for environmental stewardship remains a top priority in Montana and connected ecosystems, and young people, including veterans, are seeking opportunities to serve and gain skills in record numbers.

Leader positions include 50 FT Field Crew Leaders, 5 FT Senior Youth Crew Leaders, 24 PT Youth Crew Leaders, and 2 PT Weed Crew leaders, all of whom start in February. Corpsmember slots include: 139 PT Corps Members, 20 QT Veteran Green Corps members, and 5 QT weed crew members. These members start in May, or August for a second group of veterans. All full-time and half-time members receive a living allowance and health insurance as they are serving in a full-time equivalent capacity. These positions will result in 25 field crews, 24 month-long Youth Service Expeditions during the summer, 4 two-and-a-half month Veterans Green Corps teams during the summer and fall, and 2 summer weed teams.

Narratives

The budget is reasonable and closely aligned with the program design. The staffing structure reflects twenty years of fine-tuning with leadership, management, and project cultivation from the headquarters in Bozeman, and efficient utilization of year-round and seasonal staff in the five regional offices to deliver local project support and ensure supervision of more than forty far-flung crews with 6-8 members each. The orientation and member training activities are targeted to provide the crew leaders and members with the necessary skills for productive service experiences and education for continued civic engagement and stewardship. Trainings for the staff ensure that MCC utilizes best practices and remains actively engaged within Montana communities.

In such a vast state, transportation represents a significant cost for the program. Funds support staff travel related to program and project support. Member travel supports costs for meals, fuel, and maintenance of a vehicle fleet to transport forty-three crews. The equipment expense supports replacement of three aging vehicles for crew travel.

The grantee share is $3,118,000 or 62% of the total budget. This 3% increase in grantee match over the previous recompete application shows MCC's continuing progress towards reducing the federal share.

The match is comprised of diverse sources of revenue including contributions from project partners, and grants and donations that support MCC programs and projects. Project support from the 177 partners remains the most significant and sustainable source of support. In 2011, $2.9 million in revenues came from federal and state agencies like the Forest Service, National Parks, State Parks, and Montana Department of Health and Human Services. This project revenue also includes grants from the State administered Recreational Trails program which supports community trails endeavors like the Foys to Blacktail trail system near Kalispell, or Thompson Park outside Butte. Nonprofit organizations like Prickly Pear Land Trust, World Wildlife Fund, and Lions Club Hyalite Youth Camp provide revenue to support projects in communities.

With 30% of Montana's lands under federal authority, and 99% of the state's trails on Forest Service land, the significant share of the grantee match is from other federal sources. The 2009 Serve America Act authorizes these other federal funds as allowable match. MCC has obtained written authorization from these agencies to use their funds as match to AmeriCorps. The Department of Interior has issued

a department-wide memorandum authorizing the use of funds for match, and the Forest Service authorizes the match for each of the MCC cooperative agreements.

Grants and donation play an increasing role in supporting the expansion of AmeriCorps MCC programs to engage youth in service and environmental stewardship. For 2013, MCC projects to develop $120,000 in grants and donations. This increasing support reflects the great community support for MCC in Montana, especially when one considers that Montana ranks 48th in philanthropic resources.

MCC continues to demonstrate the strongest capacity to develop a sustainable source of matching funds to support the program and decrease the reliance on federal funds.

COST PER MEMBER: MCC is requesting $12,990 per MSY. This rate reduces the cost per member from previous years, and reflects MCC's ongoing commitment to increase the grantee share and decrease reliance on federal share as the MCC program continues to strengthen.

Evaluation Summary or Plan

MCC was one of twenty-one corps that participated in the 2008 CNCS-sponsored National Evaluation of Youth Corps. Findings released in fall highlight positive results from participation in MCC. 65% of MCC members, compared to 46% of others members in the study, continued to volunteer after their AmeriCorps service. The study showed MCC alumni with hourly earnings averaging $11.63/hr compared to $8.55/hr for the control group. 94% of MCC members would recommend joining a corps to a friend.

In 2011, MCC initiated two external and independent evaluations. MCC contracted with Education Northwest to conduct a two-year evaluation of MCC member outcomes utilizing qualitative and quantitative analyses. Preliminary results from Year 1 show 71% of members with improvements in citizenship and service values, and 78% with improved leadership skills.

For the second evaluation, MCC joined a group of conservation corps in a Texas A&M study of corps impacts on youth and their future employment and recreational interests. Results show significant positive outcomes in areas of leadership, teamwork, community engagement, environmental activism, self-responsibility, and interest in natural resource careers.

Narratives

Amendment Justification

N/A

Clarification Summary

2012 BUDGET CLARIFICATION ITEMS

1) The number of slots listed in program narrative does not align with the number referenced in the budget and performance measures section. Please revise to match the dollar and MSY amount for which you are under consideration.

MCC requests 245 slots for 144.11 MSY. Budget and performance measures are aligned with the following member configuration:

Crew Leaders:
- 5 full-time (1700 hr.) Senior Youth Crew Leaders serving early-February to November
- 24 part-time (900 hr.) Youth Crew Leaders serving mid-February to August
- 50 full-time (1700 hr.) Field Crew Leaders serving mid-February to November
- 2 part-time (900 hr.) Weed Crew Leaders serving mid-February to August

Total crew leaders = 55 Full-Time leaders + 26 Part-Time leaders = 81

Corps Members
- 139 part-time (900 hr.) Corps Members serving on field crews, May to November
- 20 quarter-time (450 hr.) Veterans Green Corps Members serving May to August, and August to October
- 5 quarter-time (450hr.) Weeds Crews Corps Members serving May to August

Though numbers in the program narrative (p.24) were accurate in aggragate, the narrative was clarified to more clearly reflect the numbers indicated in the budget. Budget slots remain the same.

2) Section A: Please verify that the Partnerships Director does not fundraise during the 50% time charged to this grant. Describe the roles of the 5 field coordinators, Member Recruitment Coordinator, and Member management coordinator.

Narratives

The Partnerships Director does not fundraise while charging time to the grant. Time charged to the grant is to increase projects and partnerships for youth to serve as part of this AmeriCorps program, and work with companies to get volunteers on projects.

MCC hires one 10-month Field Coordinator in each of our five regional offices to provide essential technical training of crew leaders during the spring, and field supervision and technical expertise on projects. This position is from February through November.

The Member Recruitment Coordinator recruits members, responds to applicant inquiries, and does initial screenings of over 1000 applicants. This position also manages the member blog, MCC website and Facebook page, and e-newsletter for members and alumni.

The Member Management Coordinator oversees background checks, reviews member files and time logs, and assists with member enrollment, exits, and records. This position also assists with coordination of member training.

3) Section C (this is a typo, should be "G"): Please explain which five members will be attending the Senior Youth Crew Leader Orientation and how it is separate from the Leader Statewide Orientation.

This orientation is for the five Senior Youth Crew Leaders (SYCL) who start two weeks prior to the other crew leaders. These five members serve as team leaders of the youth crew leaders in each region and help coordinate, train, and support the Youth Crew Leaders throughout the season. As full-time members, the SYCL's continue service through the fall to develop and implement volunteer service opportunities for youth and community members. The SYCL orientation addresses the specific responsibilities of this role as team leaders and community liaisons for youth projects. In addition they are provided with an overview of the MCC Service Day practices, systems, and forms in order to better equip them to lead regional efforts. SYCL's will also be introduced to the youth crew member recruitment process and protocol so that they may begin to develop recruitment systems in their region prior to the arrival of the Youth Crew Leaders. The Senior Youth Crew Leaders will then participate in the Statewide Leader Orientation with other leaders. This orientation is focused on

introducing the MCC and setting tone of service for all leaders.

4) Section E: Please clarify the differences between the Gear line items. For Crew Office and Computer supplies, clarify whether these items are allocated solely to this grant, and if so, are used only for this grant.

Gear: The budget narrative was revised to describe the differences in gear items. Standard issue gear for members includes the official "AmeriCorps greys" service gear (t-shirt, sweatshirt), 1 long sleeve t-shirt for safety, and two MCC uniform t-shirts. All items have the AmeriCorps logo. Youth crew participants are issued 2 MCC uniform t-shirts.

Crew Office Supplies reflects average monthly costs of $240/region incurred by the five MCC regional offices for routine office and computer supplies such as paper, printer ink, pens, clipboards, file folders, and other non-capitalized office supplies under $5,000 such as desks, chairs, computers, printers. Budget is based on historical averages. MCC regional offices operate only this AmeriCorps grant and these costs are allocated solely to this grant. This item does not include postage or off-site printing/photocopying.

5) Section G: Clarify which staff attend which trainings, and the need for each. Provide information to explain Leadership Summit Trainers, as well as Technical Skills Training, with cost basis.

5a) STAFF TRAINING: MCC provides staff professional development to ensure best practices and guide continuous improvement throughout the program.

Corps Network Annual Conference: Two senior management staff attend this annual conference to develop skills and learn best practices for corps operations. Information is shared with staff and supports annual program development.

Wilderness Risk Managers Conference: Regional staff who supervise members serving in wilderness settings attend this conference. Information learned guides the activities of the MCC Risk

Management Committee and advances state of the art field practices for members serving in remote areas.

Regional Trainings: Two staff, typically regional supervisors or regional program coordinators attend trainings such as State Trails Conference or Wilderness First Responder training to build skills, maintain certifications, or share practices with essential partners.

Regional Trainings: These statewide training for ten program and administrative staff foster professional development at annual conferences of groups like the Montana Nonprofit Association or Montana Association of Conservation Districts. These events are important for maintain professional partnerships between MCC and stakeholders. Participants report back to staff to maximize learning values for the organization.

Local Trainings: Ten staff attend local skills development trainings -- computer skills, supervisory, financial practices, etc. These training ensure staff progress in their job skills.

In-House Staff Training: Twice a year, MCC brings its full staff together to develop professional skills essential to the performance of their job, to review past year practices, and plan for the upcoming program.

CNCS Conference Registration: This supports sending one staff member -- program or operations -- to the national CNCS conference. Staff report back to the MCC on sessions they attended.

5b) MEMBER TRAINING: LEADERSHIP SUMMIT TRAINERS

The MCC Leadership Summits are divided between the Field Crew Leaders and Youth Crew Leaders in order to address the unique demands of working with young adults or youth. MCC relies heavily on its state and regional staff to deliver these trainings, but due to the breadth of information covered, external practitioners are contracted to deliver the most effective content possible. External professionals serve as trainers within their area of expertise, including working with teenagers, field judgment and decision making, experiential learning, and emotional intelligence. Leadership Summit Trainers are contracted at $500/day for 2 days each at $1,000 per Summit, or $2,000 total. The $500 per day reimbursement rate is determined by Montana market value. This rate has not increased in

recent years, and is below the recommended Federal daily rate reflecting Montana rates.

5c) MEMBER TRAINING: TECHNICAL SKILLS TRAINING

In order to fully prepare MCC Leaders to lead crews on diverse conservation projects, MCC provides them with "Technical Skills Trainings." This training includes five days on the use of chainsaws and crosscut saws, three days on trail maintenance and construction, and two days of backcountry skills. All trainings also include further instruction on MCC policies and procedures, emergency procedures, Meaning of Service and PLACE education, Leadership theory readings, and First Aid scenarios. The budget includes meals. Each regional office is provided with $1,000 to contract with technical specialists to deliver up to five days of contracted services at $200/day. Rates are based on past year rates and are determined by Montana market rates agreed upon by skilled professionals.

6) Section I: Please explain why there is a need for $60 per month for copies and $60 per month for postage for crew communications in addition to the supplies of $240 per month per region. Please explain why the costs for operating regional offices are assessed for 12 months when crews are operating only 5 or 6 months of the year. Please explain if this AmeriCorps program is the only one operating out of each of the five regional offices and, if not, how costs for regional offices, such as rent, utilities, and internet, are allocated between programs.

Postage and off-site printing (ie: Kinkos) are not included in the Crew Office and Computer Supplies line item. The Crew Communications item reflects costs for printing and mailing documents such as project agreements, member enrollment forms, biweekly crew reports, evaluations, project reports. This documentation is posted from the five regional office locations to the MCC headquarters where member and project information is data-based and stored.

This AmeriCorps program is the only one operating out of the regional offices and thus all regional operations costs are allocated to this grant.

Regional offices are in operation 12 months of the year. Members are present February to November, with December and January used for recruitment, program close-out and grant reporting, project development, and program planning.

Narratives

2012 PROGRAMMATIC CLARIFICATION ITEMS

1) Please confirm your desired grant award start date and member enrollment period start date.

Desired grant award start date is January 1, 2013. Member enrollment period start date is January 1, 2013. MCC begins enrolling members in January for the February start date for crew leaders, and June start for corps members.

2) Please outline each member type and each member role and provide the number of slots and description of each.

MCC continues to expand means for AmeriCorps members to meet needs in our communities. The following positions describe member roles developed over twenty years of refining our conservation corps model.

Senior Youth Crew Leaders: 5 Full-Time members serve early-February to November. These members are team leaders for the youth crew leaders in each region. They assist staff in coordinating service projects and support the youth crew leaders during the spring and summer. During the fall, they coordinate community volunteer events and recruit volunteers, especially students. These "senior" leaders do not supervise other members.

Youth Crew Leaders: 24 Part-Time members serve mid-February to August. During the spring, these members train while completing projects and recruiting youth for the summer service expeditions. From June to August, working as co-leaders and supported by the Senior Youth Crew Leaders, these members lead 24 month-long sessions of the Youth Service Expeditions with 144 youth.

Field Crew Leaders: 50 Full-Time members serve mid-February to November. These members receive leadership and technical skills training, provide service, and mobilize volunteers between February and May. From May to November, serving with a co-leader, they lead a crew of 4-5 corps members

serving on community and public lands projects. Crew leaders do not supervise other corps members.

Corps Members: 139 Part-Time members serve in full-time capacity from May to November. Four to five corps members serve on each crew. Members are trained to complete diverse conservation and service projects, and learn values and skills to be productive individuals and engaged citizens.

Weed Crew Leaders: 2 Part-Time members serve mid-February to August. These members receive similar training as the Field Crew Leaders to lead smaller teams on invasive species management projects from May to August when weeds are growing and reproducing. These crew leaders do not supervise the corps members.

Weed Crew Corps Members: 5 quarter-time members serve May to August on 3-4 person weed crews. Members are trained to survey, monitor, and control invasive weeds on public lands.

Veterans Green Corps members: 20 quarter-time veterans members serve on 3-month crews from May to August, or August to October. Veterans receive specialized training for chainsaw operation and wildfire fighting, and complete projects to restore forest health.

3) Please explain how 29 crew leaders will serve 24 Youth Service Expeditions in the summer with 2 crew leaders each.

Each Youth Service Expedition is led by two AmeriCorps co-leaders. In total, 24 Youth Crew Leaders will lead 24 sessions of the month-long Expeditions with high school-aged students -- 12 sessions in early-summer followed by 12 sessions ending mid-August. In addition, 5 Senior Youth Crew Leaders, one in each MCC region, are team-leaders for the youth program, and provide community coordination, expertise, and on-site project support for the youth leaders during the spring and summer. The Senior Youth Crew Leaders continue into the fall, organizing volunteer activities for youth, students, and community members during events like 9/11 Day of Service and National Public Lands Day.

Narratives

4) Please provide additional information regarding how the supervision plan for crews operating in remote areas is sufficient.

Supervision begins with sound policies, regular staff training, and implementation of up-to-date risk management and field supervision practices. Though not always present 24/7 with the crews, MCC staff provides attentive supervision for crews in the field. The MCC Regional Program Coordinators and Field Coordinators, and to a lesser extent, Regional Supervisors, are weekly in the field supervising and supporting crew members. Even crews serving in the most remote settings for multi-week projects receive regular site visits by MCC staff. In most cases, crews have daily radio check-ins with the sponsor agency at pre-arranged times. These sponsors contact MCC if problems arise.

Training for members is tailored to meet the needs of crews operating in remote areas. Leaders are trained in Wilderness Advanced First Aid, including backcountry evacuations and helicopter extractions. Members receive Wilderness First Aid training. Prior to crews deploying to remote areas, they are briefed on safety, communications, and policies and field practices. Crew leaders debrief with staff after every 5 to 10-day hitch. Leaders maintain a daily log that is turned in and reviewed after every hitch. Crews have access to staff via cell phones or hand-held radios.

In addition to the supervision provided by MCC staff, our project partners commonly work with the crews providing onsite support for the crews. Project partners are informed of MCC and AmeriCorps policies, and MCC maintains close communications with these project partners. MCC maintains supervision of all members to ensure state of the art risk management procedures and compliance with MCC and AmeriCorps policies.

5) Please further describe how specific projects are selected, and how member activities are determined to be sufficiently effective in addressing the identified need.

A significant share of MCC projects take place on state or federal public lands. For these projects, land management agencies have gone through extensive needs prioritization processes, often with public input and required permitting processes such as environmental impact assessments. Project sponsors then submit an application to MCC that describes the need for the project and activities to be

undertaken, certifies that permits have been obtained, and verifies that MCC members do not displace employees. MCC Regional Supervisors negotiate with the project applicant to ensure that MCC crews have the capability to address the needs and that the project meets MCC criteria.

MCC criteria for selecting projects include that the project meets a priority need in environmental stewardship or community enhancement, that it provides a lasting benefit for the community, that the project may be accomplished safely and effectively by members, that MCC or the partner is able to provide the necessary training and project direction to ensure completion the project, that the partner may offer quality education or development opportunities for the members, and any necessary project support (materials, specialized tools, etc.)

MCC has also become a "go-to" for diverse nonprofit organizations that rely on the capacity of MCC crews to help them serve the needs of their stakeholders. These organizations undertake internal processes to assess their ability to commit funds and/or personnel resources to support an MCC crew. Similarly to public agencies, nonprofits must submit and negotiate a project application with an MCC regional supervisor.

6) Please confirm that crew leaders are not supervisors for the other members.

MCC AmeriCorps Crew Leaders do not supervise other members. They provide project leadership and technical skills and are responsible for fostering a positive team dynamic and for following MCC field practices. However, all supervision responsibilities rest with the MCC staff (enforcement of policies, discipline, hiring, firing, evaluation, verification of timesheets for accuracy and approved activities, etc.).

7) Further describe what volunteers are recruited to do, who the potential volunteers are, and whether members are trained to recruit and manage volunteers if it is part of their role.

Field and Youth Crew Leaders receive three hours of training on volunteer recruitment and management at the Statewide Leader Orientation in February. Topics include recruitment and

retention strategies, outreach and publicity, service project logistics and design, reflection and education activities, as well as volunteer tracking and evaluation. These skills are immediately put to use as leaders organize and host service events for volunteers during the spring. Additional volunteers are recruited throughout the year to participate in service events hosted by MCC leaders and corps members (i.e.: Global Youth Service Day, Nat'l Public Lands Day) to improve local parks and trails or other community resources. To support these efforts, MCC coordinates with local schools and youth organizations, partners with local businesses, and invites the public-at-large. These far reaching efforts generate volunteers that represent the full diversity of Montana's communities.

2012 PERFORMANCE MEASURE CLARIFICATION ITEMS

1) EN1: Describe how you will ensure that the weatherization services are sufficient to result in 15% increase in energy efficiency, which is a requirement of EN1. (The program as described does not meet the CNCS requirement for EN1 of weatherization efforts expecting to reduce consumption by 15 percent or greater.) If it does, describe what is being measured on the proposed Home Assessment Questionnaire instrument: "occupant assessment of improvements on a 5 point scale"; this does not seem sufficient to accurately measure change in the Outcome. If it does not, this measure could possibly be converted to EN3 to encompass the education being provided to homeowners, with an appropriate applicant-determined outcome.

MCC will convert this measure to EN3. We have consulted with experts at the Montana Weatherization Training Center regarding a standardized and cost-efficient mechanism to measure and document improvements in energy efficiency from low cost energy-retrofit measures. Employees at this center train our members and are familiar with the practices we use to provide low cost energy-conservation retrofits. After consultation, it was decided it would be difficult to measure for the 15% increase in efficiency.

MCC will substitute EN3 for this measure. Our target output of this measure will be that members provide 2000 homeowners and renters with education on energy efficient practices as part of their regular energy retrofit activities. The outcome will be that 1600 homeowners and renters (80% of individuals) will report improved knowledge and understanding of energy efficient practices as a result of education they received from members.

Narratives

2) EN4 and EN5: Please change the outcome measures for EN4 and EN5 to measure the same thing being measured by the output (e.g. improved acres would measure number of acres rated as improved).

EN4 is revised as follows:
Output: Members will complete 2500 acres of projects to improve parks, and public and tribal lands.
Outcome -- 2125 acres (85% of 2500 acres) of parks, and public and tribal lands are rated as improved by land managers.

EN5 is revised as follows:
Output: Members will create or improve 650 miles of trails each year.
Intermediate Outcome: 553 miles of trails (85% of 650 miles of work done by members) are rated as improved by trails managers.

3) Please provide more details on the process for tracking acres and miles, how the program ensures the accuracy of these measures and how the program ensures that there is no duplication.

Acres and miles are measured upon the completion of each project by crew leaders, and verified on the project evaluation by professional technical advisors from the project sponsoring agency. Only results for work completed (i.e.: miles of trail maintained or acres of land improved) are logged to ensure there is no duplication. Results for miles of trail or acres improved are compared to the scope of work described by the sponsoring agency (i.e.: Forest Service, State Park), or as defined by the on-site project supervisor. Distances may be confirmed using topographic maps or GPS devices. MCC data systems ensure that projects results are not duplicated with each project defined by date and project code.

4) Please provide additional information about the qualifications of the project partners to rate the conditions of trails or land improved.

Narratives

Projects are evaluated by professional staff of the partner organization hosting the project. This may be a USFS Wilderness Ranger, or State Park Resources Management staff person overseeing the project. Project evaluations are completed by the representative of the sponsoring agency who is charged with overseeing the activities of the MCC crew.

5) V1: The measure V1 is intended for use with service beneficiaries who are not members. For this program design, either V2 or V4 would be appropriate to select (but not both, since that would result in a duplicate count). Please revise.

This measure has been converted to th V2 measure, "Number of veterans engaged in service."
Output: Engage 20 veterans in the MCC Veterans Green Corps.
Outcome: 16 of 20 veterans obtain the S212 and Basic Wildland Firefighter certifications to increase their employability.

Continuation Changes

N/A

Required Documents

Document Name	Status
Evaluation	Already on File at CNCS
Labor Union Concurrence	Sent